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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, June 20, 1932

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Pepping Up the Low-Cost Meal." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

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What's the best way to can cherries?"

That's what somebody asked me over the phone the other day. Far be it from me to lay down the law on a scientific subject like canning, far be it from me to announce that the right way or the best way to put up anything is thus and so. I have my notions and you have yours. That's the way we housekeepers are. But fortunately I'm acquainted with the specialists in home economics who are as wise as old Solomon himself when it comes to canning--and a lot of other things. So, anytime you ask, I'll be delighted to tell you what advice they offer on household matters.

Here's what they advise about putting up cherries:

"If you have large sweet cherries, the easiest way is to can them whole. Pack them raw in hot containers and fill up the jar with boiling syrup.

"About that syrup. For sweet cherries use one cup of sugar to two cups of liquid. Heat the sugar and water together until the sugar dissolves and the syrup boils.

"About processing the containers of cherries and syrup. Give quart and pint glass jars of cherries 25 minutes processing in boiling water. But if you use tin cans, you'll need only twenty minutes' processing for Number 2 and Number 3 tins. And as for the tins cans, be sure to use the kind called sanitary enameled or "R."

"If you are canning sour red cherries for pies, seed them first and heat them in an open kettle. Then it won't take so long to process them. Sweeten the seeded cherries and their juice with enough sugar to suit your family's taste, and boil them in a kettle for five minutes. Then pack them at once in hot containers. Place them in a hot canner and process at the boiling point for only five minutes. Generally, precooking the fruit gives

a fuller pack in the jar or tin."

That's all about cherries and about canning today. This is economy day and I've been over talking with the Recipe Lady about pepping up the low-cost meal, about seasoning and flavoring tricks to make inexpensive foods taste like a million dollars.

Just between ourselves, let's admit that housewives have to fool their families every now and then. Not that I'm urging fraud and deceit in the home. Far from it. I'm just suggesting that there are times when it's right to fool your family and when they'll thank you for it. The same old soup, the same old greens, the same potatoes even, have twice the appeal to the family's appetite if they look different and taste different. It's easy enough to dress up foods, if you have a lot of money to spend. But what to do when the purse strings must be pulled tight? Here's where your inexpensive seasonings come in to vary the low-cost meal. Here's where little tricks of flavoring can bring variety on the scene.

Let me tell you what the Recipe Lady has to say on this subject.

"If you want to give flavor to soups and stews," she advises: "one of the best ways is to brown, in fat, the meat and vegetables that you are using. Also use crisp bits of salt pork or bacon. Add them the last minute instead of putting them in 'as is' at the beginning. A stew made this way will taste quite different from the stew made of the diced fresh vegetables, or from meat and vegetables simply cooked in water."

When it comes to herbs and other seasonings, there are plenty of those to depend on for pepping up the same old foods.

Grandmother's herb garden was a fragrant spot with all the flavorings and seasonings that most of us now buy at the corner store. There was thyme, tarragon, sage and parsley in that garden. There was peppermint and spearmint, dill and chives and many other savory plants for sauces, salad dressings and drinks. W.R.B., the garden specialist, says that everyone of us housekeepers can have a little herb garden of our own right in our own kitchen. Grow it in anything from old saucers and flower pots to hanging baskets and window boxes. Parsley, chives, thyme, mint, tarragon--all of these little plants grow readily this way. But if you have any space in your back yard, this is the season to cultivate a few herbs out there.

One of our most common inexpensive seasonings is the reliable onion. The Recipe Lady says that onion juice often gives a better flavor--certainly a more delicate one--than chopped onion. The next time you fix tomato sauce for meat, try onion juice in it and just a pinch of cloves.

Celery makes another good flavoring. Dear me, how I hate to see anyone throw away celery leaves or tops! When they are dried they make such fine seasoning for soups and meat stuffings. Save your celery leaves as grandmother did and hang them up in a paper sack in the kitchen to dry. They're both cheap and full of flavor. So is celery seed.

Speaking of stuffings, the mint leaves and the watercress that grow down in the stream in the back lot are also good, especially for flavoring the stuffing in roast lamb. Celery seed is excellent not only in stuffings but also in potato salad and cabbage salad or cold slaw.

When you're fixing green beans next time try a little mace with them--very little. That's a German flavoring. And this unusual seasoning adds interest to the dish of canned snap beans, if you care creaming them.

Some people like a "suspicion" of nutmeg in chicken soup and a "ghost" of curry powder in French salad dressing. The French chef usually rubs his mixing bowl or salad bowl with a half a clove of garlic before he puts in the ingredients. Enough paprika to make your French dressing pink adds to its looks and its flavor.

As for mayonnaise, that other popular salad dressing, you can vary that in many pleasant ways. Some of your homemade chili sauce or catsup will make it much like Russian dressing. A bit of mustard will give it a new taste. So will celery salt.

What about varying the flavor of your cakes and desserts? Have you ever tried almond flavoring? Most of us use vanilla and lemon so much that almond makes a nice change. So does the grated peel of an orange or a lemon.

Caramel is a homemade flavor that is usually very popular and costs very little. You can use this flavor in cake, custard, puddings, cream pies and pudding sauces. Such old stand-bys in the dessert line as rice, and bread puddings, you can vary by adding chocolate. See if the youngsters won't eat chocolate rice or bread pudding when they have tired of the plain kind.

To vary a cake or a cookie recipe, you can add a few raisins or other dried fruit and shredded coconut also.

By the way, did you ever surprise your family with some attractive little orange biscuits for supper in place of cake or cookies. Orange or cinnamon toast also make inexpensive and different accompaniments to desserts.

The real art of seasoning is never to overdo it. That's what the Recipe Lady says. Use just a little. Your dish will be better and your supply of seasonings will last longer.

Here is a little seasoning budget for your kitchen providing a supply, which should last for many weeks. It doesn't include salt and pepper, but it does include the seasonings that most clever cooks want to have on hand. And the cost only totals 65 cents.

Celery seed; sage thyme or poultry seasoning; mustard; curry powder; nutmeg or cinnamon; and vanilla.

Cloves, allspice, pickle spice, mixed cake spice, mace, ginger, paprika, bay leaf and bottled horseradish--any of these you can substitute at a cost of 8 to 10 cents a package. Almond extract, shredded coconut and chocolate cost from 7 to 23 cents a package. By the way, you know you can often use cocoa in place of chocolate in cake, puddings, and so on. It costs less.

Our inexpensive meal today features beef balls and tomato sauce; Buttered rice; lettuce, cucumber and green pepper salad with French dressing; and for dessert raspberries and cream.

Tuesday: "Household Questions."

